



January 27, 2014

Dear legislators,

Thank you for your work on school accountability. We agree that every child deserves to attend a school that is capable of meeting their needs. A state level accountability system ought to provide parents and guardians across the state with information on school status and progress, and it ought to ensure that interventions occur when a school is not performing well.

We appreciate that several parts of the bill you are considering today move closer to that goal, including the fact that it uses a single test to more fairly compare schools across the system and that it uses a more clear system to communicate how a school is performing, rather than letter grades that inevitably lead to reactive strategies.

We also appreciate that SB 1 does a better job of allowing schools to chart a path to improvement, rather than imposing sanctions that have no record of improving outcomes for students. If a school is failing or struggling, we believe we have a responsibility to students, families and community members to make meaningful change. This bill gives schools a better chance to do that rather than enacting sanctions that have no consistent evidence of improving outcomes for children. As you consider this bill, we urge you to remember that any accountability system should be coupled with the resources to support real improvement in our schools.

I would be happy to talk with you more and answer any questions that you have. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Cheatham
Superintendent
Madison Metropolitan School District